

To
Doctor Jacob Chenoweth
of West Chester
In the County of Chester
This Dissertation

Is gratefully Dedicated, as a small but genuine
tribute of respect, not only for his talents as an
enlightened and successful Practitioner of
Medicine. But for the amiable Qualities
which he possesses as a man, and for the
many private marks of disinterested Friend-
ship and esteem which he has so often con-
ferred upon his sincere Friend and late Pa-
tient.

The Author

In
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Conception

The subject of this dissertation is a difficult one as the multitude of Physiologists who have for laurels in this field can but bear with the difficulty of this pursuit and the penetrating genius of the illustrious Harvey though adequate to a full exposition of the circulation of the blood fails in vain in the mysterious researches of generation. The philosopher notwithstanding by experiments when pointed to object conferred immortality on his name when presented to another secured him to with contemporary reputation. It is not a view of unfolding this mysterious subject, but have chosen it as a fit one for this Dissertation but with a view from the few remarks I shall offer some more happy may overcome the prejudices of the human mind and solve the difficulty so that can doubt the truth of it and one of prevail

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Numerous are the theories that have been advanced on this subject according to Dr. Lin-cowt a teacher of Bonhaues he collected no less than two hundred and sixty two hypotheses on this subject. But I shall content myself with mentioning a few of them as some of them are so ridiculous as to be wholly unworthy of criticism as the much beloved Professor Dr. Chapman justly observed. It is necessary gentlemen that I should be understood (before I go further) that by conception I mean that power by which the rudiments of the fetus is first formed.

The most of them have contended that the semen is thrown into the uterus by injection from the Penis which I shall content to name the case. It among those who suppose that the Fetus is formed exclusively by the Female, and that it only wants the stimulus of the male semen to excite it into greater action I may mention Harvey Walter Malassani and Bennett I shall particularly speak of Malassani as he appears to be its chief supporter he proved what he thought to sufficient to satisfy the mind of the Physiologist that the Fetus was formed

is that it waited in miniature in the
before impregnation and that the male
was only of use to stimulate the little being
greater action for he infers from their own
is sure they have life and motion but in
very languid manner from the slowness
of the fluids.

I think his opinion unfounded or a
romantic doctrine as their increasing in number
not infer that they have life or motions
themselves. But it only proves that nature
endowed those animals that is there are
that have their eggs impregnated after
are discharged from their bodies as Dr.
Newt which he experimented upon the
peculiarity of increasing their eggs about
time of their being discharged from the body.
For if all their eggs had been of that size
their maturity it certainly would have
of great inconvenience to them from the
now use and life would have been
burthen rather than a pleasure to
But he says it is in a very languid
view from the slow motions of
fluids.

5
I think from these words (slow motion of the fluids)
he must have seen all the animal functions going
on in a regular manner only in a slower grade
of action that gentlemen he mentions in another
place that they were in the centre of two con-
centric membranes the innermost when pierced
discharged a fluid as limpid as water only
which is sufficient proof that he never saw
any motion of the fluids

But if his opinion is correct the European
and African copulating together their offspring
must either be the colour of the one or the
other which we know is not the case for
their offspring is a Mulatto

Lockeview the Op and the Male producing
a Male these cases show that it does not exist
in miniature in the brain before impregnation

2^d Linnæus having discovered animalcula
in the male semen he raised a new theory
which is that the male semen being emitted
from the penis into the cavity of the uterus
it from thence passed into the fallopian tubes
and by those tubes upon the brain those
a general engagement takes place in which
all are slain save only one who master of
the field of battle finds the triumph of his

6 History within the drum that has been
passed for him it being now pregnant
this little animal is squeezed from its
through the coat of the ovum and as
forth is seized by the funiculus which con-
it into the tube and by this tube into the
This theory however ingenious I think
Linnæus is attended with a circumstance
into inexplicable namely the manner in which
animalcula gain admission into the ovum

But if animalcula exist as he pretends
discovered with a rounded head a taper
tail and moving with rapidity (which
nothing more than those animalcula
seen in other fluids of the body) nature
have been very profuse in her operations
to produce so many creatures for no purpose
to decay

2^d The seed never penetrates the cavity of
uterus let alone the fallopian tube the
perm has a considerable yeetile power
evident by the force with which the
discharged but in the act of coition
lose most of its yeetile power from the
moss with which it is grasped by the

wholly suspended we see likewise in the
 tenacity and weight of the semen that it cannot
 be ejected to any distance and whenever the
 muscles may become impelled in their opera-
 tion as well as structures in the wreaths. There
 is however a barrier in the vagina contri-
 buting to the same end namely the rugae on
 its inner surface but let us suppose for a
 moment that it was coated as far as the
 os tunicæ how could it enter the uterus for in
 the virgin uterus it is not much larger than
 the funiculus and is not on an axis with the
 vagina either inclining to one side or the other
 or backwards therefore he must be a marks-
 man that could hit so small an object of his
 arrow which way it inclined unless we agree
 with Plato who compared this organ to an
 animal living within another animal controlling
 all the actions of the living economy, burning
 to set itself with the liquor of the male and
 digesting it to form a new individual but
 this is not all the os tunicæ is filled up with
 a thick gelatinous matter for the most part
 capable of considerable resistance where it
 is wanting as is generally the case in the

virgin uterus the hard unyielding lips of
 it is nearly closed. Nor are there the
 barriers to the passage of the seed for in the
 conimpregnated uterus the coat of the neck
 of the uterus will scarcely admit a com-
 munal probe besides it is full of rugae
 along its whole length and between
 these are glands secreting a mucus abun-
 dantly calculated for the purpose of additional
 protection this might be considered as sufficient
 without mentioning those malconformities
 of the parts and the experiments of Haller
 which shall be mentioned hereafter

Dr. N. D. Buffon raised a new theory when
 that the male ~~sperm~~ female furnish
 what is necessary for impregnation. He
 says he is nothing but an assemblage
 of organic particles extracted from all parts
 of the body of which the form as it were
 many epitomes. Their organical particles
 which he calls living and active because
 their continual motion are so shaped and
 formed that they cannot unite and
 coalesce but with the particles sent from
 the same part of the other sex

That is to say that the particles furnished by the eye of the man cannot be caught and united but by those furnished by the eye of the woman and so of other parts

The formation of the sex not being explicable by this ingenious theory the author's imagination has supplied it, by supposing that the sex was formed according to the quantity sent from either of them if the male sent the greater quantity it turned out a boy if the female a girl

Reason rejects a theory which gives no explanation of the production of the placenta and membranes that cover the foetus. It is moreover directly disproved by the good conformation of children born of parents who not hoping to have certain limbs or organs could not supply the proper molecules for their formation in the child

I will now mention some malformations in the female organs of generation which will prove that the foetus is not formed according to either of these opinions

- 1st Sauvageau relates a case in his 169th Observ. of a woman who conceived and was

10 delivered of a child although her legs
had not been broken in section.

• 2^d Knyssch has given another case where
a woman in labour whose hymen was
and prevented delivery of the child by
head it was distended an incision being
cautiously made through it he perceived
another thick membrane farther in the
vagina which being opened the woman was

• 3^d Hildanus gives another case nearly
similar to the two preceding namely
young woman at Paris who during marriage
could not admit the embraces of her
husband for a divorce but as she was
herself to be with child a midwife
called in who pronounced her not
with child and said it was as impossible
felt a pain by throbbing at the do
Surgeon being called he agreed with
midwife but others being called they
removed a thick membrane it being decided
by proper means kept open the husband
satisfied and the woman was in
safety delivered of a full grown child.

These cases without mentioning other
I have submitted to the three preceding cases

ded by different authors is sufficient proof to show that woman who had their vagina closed up by the hymen did conceive without having it broken by coition therefore could not have the male semen gited into the uterus according to either of these opinions.

I am aware that some Physiologists have seen what they took for semen beyond the os tinea but neither of them could ever detect it more than once and I Chapman very justly remarks that it must have been the natural mucus of the part as there is much counter evidence against them.

Haughton likewise proved that if one of the fallopian tubes of a rabbit was divided and she afterwards became impregnated corpora lutea were formed in both ovaries (which he proved was a sure mark of impregnation having proceeded) but no ovum was found on the mutilated side either in the tube or horn of the uterus but there was ovum found on the other side or the uninjured ~~side~~ and he likewise proved as De Graaf had before him that the ovaries were the seat of conception.

Now these experiments likewise prove
conception cannot take place according to
of their doctrines

6th Harvey supposed that the semen
him up absorption and carried into the
lation and by the spermatic artery to the
um to give them greater stimulus as he
posed them to exist in miniature but if
was the case it must become perfect ch
fore it could enter the circulation as it
pass through the receptaculum chyli to
into the circulation and I believe we
no account of any foreign matter ever
detected in the chyle we will suppose
a moment that the semen does enter
circulation and retains its stimulus
become perfectly mixed with the blood
it could enter those small vessels that
to the ovaries. But according to Prof
Chapman and others the semen is im-
ble in water until it has part of its
or that gelatinous portion when taken
the circulation which Spallanzani
would not impregnate them but
the semiconcrete portion of the semen

At any rate a very small portion could only enter the circulation as the greatest quantity is discharged immediately after coition.

But the semen has never been detected in the blood or illustrious Harvey would have some grounds for his theory.

5th Harvet adopted a new theory being aware of the difficulty that attended the others he supposed there was particular absorbents destined by nature for this particular task of impregnation viz. that the semen is carried from the vagina to the ovaries by a particular set of absorbents to impregnate one or more humors.

This opinion certainly is not correct as there is nothing similar to this in the human economy that is such small vessels lying dormant for 14 or 15 years without ever being called into action or in fact no action being required of them for the female does not experience that desire for coition until about the time of menstruation when her organs become perfect. Now a person reasoning a priori would suppose that these small vessels would become null by their sides agglutinating together which I believe would be the case if such vessels existed but as yet no such vessels

have been discovered not even where the
 minute at the source where we must suppose
 they form bundles to have any effect in them
 of malconformation if there is such refusal
 women must become changed in its purpose
 from passing through such small vessels
 as it possesses a considerable degree of
 activity which according to Spallanzani is the
 purpose position of it to produce impregnation
 Then I may conclude that there is no
 refusal as he pretends for he has fancied to
 6th And last that I shall mention is
 of Mr Haighton (which Dr Chapman adopts)
 the much beloved professor I carries
 them all and looked to something more
 turned for an explanation) His theory is
 takes place by sympathy in the connective
 parts which I shall not adopt

1st Because the woman has not sufficient
 has to emit the sympathetic operation
 requires the great excitement of the part
 and by the efflux of blood to them by
 pleasure of coition together with the
 of the part by the penis or either of
 separately applied

I infer that this excitement does take place from those cases of sterility depending on debility which being removed by proper remedies the female conceives.

2^d I infer it and that it is necessary to the operation from the circumstance related by Mr Cusackband of the rabbitkeepers knowing their time for coition by lifting up their tail and opening their vagina which is as black as ink from the turgescence of the vessels with blood.

3^d From those cases of Sympthomania which arise from an inflammation of some part of the organs of generation which being removed the disease is removed.

These circumstances I think sufficiently prove that it does not ~~take~~ place merely from the stimulus of the semen but requires the aid of the great excitement of the parts caused by the afflux of blood to them by the pleasure of coition together with the friction of the parts or either of them.

Then I may say by the excitement of the parts the semen is able to stimulate

the vagina and by the consent of heart
or force and cavity of the uterus and by
same cause the ovarian vessels enlarge
from the first rudiments of the foetus

of hand
and by
enlarge
Hester

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James

Conceptions

Sam^l. M. Puckett.

admitted March 16. 1819

on conceptions

Don. M. Pickett.

received from D. P.